

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A sweepstakes entry system for soliciting and capturing selected personal data from a user over an interactive communications network and, based on the personal data retrieved, dynamically selecting and transmitting selected graphics based applets to the user, the system comprising:

a first server having first programming for generating solicitation data and transmitting the data to a user, second programming for determining whether the user is to receive sweepstakes winnings, and third programming for electronically depositing money corresponding to the sweepstakes winnings in a financial account of the user;

a first program controlled apparatus having programming for receiving the solicitation data from the first server, displaying the data to the user in a selected data format, receiving personal data input by the user, and transmitting the personal data to the second server;

a second server having programming for processing selected personal data received from the user in response to the solicitation data and transmitting discrete content data targeted to the user based on the personal data received;

a first database for storing the personal data input by the user pursuant to the solicitation data displayed; and

an interactive communications network for facilitating the transfer of data between the first program controlled apparatus and the first and second servers;

at least one of the first and second servers housing a virtual portal for receiving the personal data and for transmitting the solicitation and discrete content data to the user over the interactive communications network.

2. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second servers has programming for capturing biographical information input by the user.

3. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second servers has programming for capturing geographic information input by the user.

4. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second servers has programming for capturing psychographic information input by the user.

5. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second servers has programming for electronically capturing the user's choice of mode of payment for collecting sweepstakes winnings.

6. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein the discrete content data includes at least one banner type advertising display based upon the personal information.

7. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein the discrete content data includes at least one popup type advertising display based upon the personal information.

8. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein the discrete content data includes at least one dynamically served offer type advertising display based upon the personal information.

9. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein at least one of the servers has programming for generating the discrete content data comprising at least one offer type advertising display to be dynamically served upon the user, the programming having at least one function for identifying and generating marketing opportunities, based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities.

10. A method of sweepstakes entry that dynamically targets selected users for receipt of selected marketing data over an interactive communications network, the method comprising the steps of:

- i. displaying a virtual process entry portal to the user for capturing selected personal data about the user;
- ii. receiving the requested personal data from the user;
- iii. validating and storing the user provided personal data;
- iv. pre-selecting marketing offers based on the user provided personal data;
- v. displaying the pre-selected marketing offers to the user;
- vi. receiving data selected by the user corresponding to at least one of the pre-selected marketing offers displayed;
- vii. validating and storing the data selected by the user;
- viii. determining whether the data selected by the user matches data in a winning data set; and
- ix. if the data selected by the user matches data in the winning data set, notifying the user of the data match.

11. The method set forth in claim 10 wherein the step of receiving the requested personal information includes capturing the user's choice of mode of payment for collecting sweepstakes winnings.

12. The method set forth in claim 10 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one banner type advertising display.

13. The method set forth in claim 10 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one popup type advertising display.

14. The method set forth in claim 10 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one dynamically served offer type advertising display.

15. The method set forth in claim 10 wherein the step of pre-selecting marketing offers based upon the user provided personal information includes the steps of identifying and generating marketing opportunities based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities.

16. A method of sweepstakes entry that solicits and captures selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and dynamically selects and transmits a graphics based routine to the user based on the personal information, the method comprising the steps of:

- i. viewing a process entry page of a virtual portal displayed by the system for

capturing selected personal data about the user;

- ii. inputting the personal data requested on the entry page;
- iii. viewing marketing offers pre-selected by the system based on the personal data input;
- iv. selecting data corresponding to at least one of the pre-selected marketing offers displayed; and
- v. if the data selected by the user matches data in a winning data set, viewing winning notification data indicating the data match.

17. A method of entering a sweepstakes that solicits and captures selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and dynamically selects and transmits a graphics based routine to the user based on the personal information, the method comprising the steps of:

- i. displaying a virtual process entry portal to the user for capturing a data set including at least one of selected biographic, geographic and/or psychographic data about the user;
- ii. receiving the requested information from the user;
- iii. validating and storing the user provided information;
- iv. pre-selecting marketing offers based on the user provided information;
- v. displaying the pre-selected marketing offers to the user;
- vi. receiving information selected by the user corresponding to at least one of the pre-selected marketing offers displayed;
- vii. validating and storing the information selected by the user;
- viii. determining whether the information selected by the user matches

information in a winning information set; and

ix. if the information selected by the user matches information in the winning information set, notifying the user of the information match.

18. The method set forth in claim 17 wherein the step of receiving the requested personal information includes capturing the user's choice of mode of payment for collecting sweepstakes winnings.

19. The method set forth in claim 17 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one banner type advertising display.

20. The method set forth in claim 17 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one popup type advertising display.

21. The method set forth in claim 17 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one dynamically served offer type advertising display.

22. The method set forth in claim 17 wherein the step of pre-selecting marketing offers based upon the user provided personal information includes the steps of identifying and generating marketing opportunities based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities.

23. A method of sweepstakes entry that solicits and captures selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network, and dynamically selects and transmits a graphics based routine to the user based on the personal information, the method comprising the steps of:

- i. viewing a process entry page of a virtual portal displayed by a system for capturing a data set including at least one of selected biographic, geographic and/or psychographic data about the user;
- ii. inputting the information requested on the entry page;
- iii. viewing marketing offers pre-selected by the system based on the information input;
- iv. selecting information corresponding to at least one of the pre-selected marketing offers displayed; and
- v. if the information selected by the user matches information in a winning information set, viewing winning notification information indicating the information match.

24. A program controlled sweepstakes entry apparatus is provided for soliciting and capturing selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and, based on the personal information, dynamically selecting and transmitting at least one graphics based routine to the user, the apparatus having programming for performing at least ten discrete functions including:

a first function for detecting user interaction;

a second function for generating a virtual portal and soliciting selected personal

information from the user;

a third function for receiving the selected personal information in response to the second function;

a fourth function for determining selected marketing content to be displayed to the user based upon the personal information input;

a fifth function for accessing at least one data page in accordance with the content determined;

a sixth function for transmitting the selected data page to the user over the network, a seventh function for displaying to the user the data page transmitted;

an eighth function for determining whether the user's personal information qualifies him or her as a winner;

a ninth function for transmitting winning notification data to the user; and

a tenth function for displaying the winning notification data to the user.

25. The system set forth in claim 24 wherein the fourth function identifies and generates marketing opportunities based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities

26. A hard drive of a program controlled apparatus housing a virtual portal for sweepstakes entry that solicits and captures selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and, based on the personal information, dynamically selects and transmits at least one graphics based routine to the user, the hard drive housing programming for performing at least ten discrete functions including:

- a first function for detecting user interaction;
- a second function for generating a virtual portal and soliciting selected personal information from the user;
- a third function for receiving the selected personal information in response to the second function;
- a fourth function for determining selected marketing content to be displayed to the user based upon the personal information input;
- a fifth function for accessing at least one data page in accordance with the content determined;
- a sixth function for transmitting the selected data page to the user over the network;
- a seventh function for displaying to the user the data page transmitted;
- an eighth function for determining whether the user's personal information qualifies him or her as a winner;
- a ninth function for transmitting winning notification data to the user; and
- a tenth function for displaying the winning notification data to the user.

27. The system set forth in claim 26 wherein the fourth function identifies and generates marketing opportunities based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities

28. A plurality of carrier wave signals transmitted over an interactive communications network of a sweepstakes entry system that operates to solicit and capture selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and, based on the personal

information, dynamically select and transmit at least one graphics based routine to the user, the signals housing at least ten discrete functions including a first operation for detecting user interaction, a second operation for generating a virtual portal and soliciting selected personal information from the user, a third operation for receiving the selected personal information in response to the second operation, a fourth operation for determining selected marketing content to be displayed to the user based upon the personal information input, a fifth operation for accessing at least one data page in accordance with the content determined, a sixth operation for transmitting the selected data page to the user over the network, a seventh operation for displaying to the user the data page transmitted, an eighth operation for determining whether the user's personal information qualifies him or her as a winner, a ninth operation for transmitting winning notification data to the user, and a tenth operation for displaying the winning notification data to the user.

29. The system set forth in claim 28 wherein the fourth function identifies and generates marketing opportunities based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities.

30. A hard drive of a program controlled apparatus, the hard drive housing a virtual portal for sweepstakes entry that solicits and captures selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and, based on the personal information, dynamically selects and transmits at least one graphics based routine to the user, the hard drive housing programming for performing a method comprising the steps of:

- i. capturing biographical information provided by the user, the biographical

information including at least one data set corresponding to the user's name, postal address, telephone number, birth date and e-mail address;

ii. capturing financial account information provided by the user that is necessary for electronically collecting and depositing money winnings of the user in a corresponding financial account;

iii. validating the biographical information and account information provided by the user;

iv. storing securely the captured biographical information and account information provided by the user on the hard drive;

v. based on the biographical information and account information, dynamically selecting and transmitting to the user at least one graphics based routine containing targeted banner offers, popup offers, or other dynamically served offers;

vi. selecting a sweepstakes entry number corresponding to the user in exchange for providing his or her biographical and account information;

vii. generating data derived from the user's biographical information, account information and the user's activities in response to the banner offers, popup offers, or other dynamically served offers;

viii. storing securely the generated data derived from the user's biographical information, account information and the user's activities;

ix. performing a winning check operation to determine whether the user is a sweepstakes winner by generating and selecting, for the account selected and at preset intervals, a winning number, conducting a winning number generation and selection integrity operation, comparing the sweepstakes entry number issued to the user to the winning number generated and

selected, and if the sweepstakes entry number matches the winning number generated, then notifying the user that he or she is a sweepstakes winner and electronically depositing a selected quantity of money in the user's credit card, checking, debit card or like account; and

x. collecting and processing the biographical information, account information, generated data derived, sweepstakes entry number, winning number and all other information relating thereto and storing such information on the hard drive for current and future use.

31. The hard drive set forth in claim 30 wherein the pre-selected marketing offers displayed to the user include at least one dynamically served offer type advertising display.

32. The hard drive set forth in claim 30 wherein the step of pre-selecting marketing offers based upon the user provided personal information includes the steps of identifying and generating marketing opportunities based upon the personal information and selected data generated by the programming for identifying and generating marketing opportunities.

33. A hard drive of a program controlled apparatus, the hard drive housing a virtual portal for sweepstakes entry that solicits and captures selected personal information from a user over an interactive communications network and, based on the personal information, dynamically selects and transmits at least one graphics based routine to the user, the hard drive housing programming for performing a method comprising the steps of:

i. determining whether the user is to receive sweepstakes winnings and, if the user is to receive winnings, electronically depositing money corresponding to the sweepstakes

winnings in a financial account of the user;

ii. capturing biographical information provided by the user, the biographical information including at least one data set corresponding to the user's name, postal address, telephone number, birth date and e-mail address;

iii. capturing financial account information provided by the user that is necessary for electronically collecting and depositing money winnings of the user in a corresponding financial account;

iv. validating the biographical information and account information provided by the user;

v. storing securely the captured biographical information and account information provided by the user on the hard drive;

vi. based on the biographical information and account information, dynamically selecting and transmitting to the user at least one graphics based routine containing targeted banner offers, popup offers, or other dynamically served offers;

vii. selecting a sweepstakes entry number corresponding to the user in exchange for providing his or her biographical and account information;

viii. generating data derived from the user's biographical information, account information and the user's activities in response to the banner offers, popup offers, or other dynamically served offers; and

ix. storing securely the generated data derived from the user's biographical information, account information and the user's activities.

34. A sweepstakes entry system for dynamically targeting selected entrants for receipt

of selected marketing data over an interactive communications network, the system having at least one hard drive for housing a customer database of sweepstakes entrants assembled by operation of the system over the network, the database containing each entrant's biographical information, information sufficient to electronically deposit winnings in at least one of the user's credit card, checking, debit card or like account, and generated data derived from the user's biographical information, account information and the user's activities in response to banner offers, popup offers, or other dynamically served offers presented to the entrant during operation of the system over the network.

35. A method for dynamically generating and serving graphics based advertising offers to a user over an interactive communications network based upon information previously collected from the user through a virtual portal, which comprises the steps of:

- i. periodically generating activity pattern data regarding the user from activity history data to represent product preference, payment preference, maximum purchase amount preference or like information;
- ii. storing the user activity data in a set of activity history database tables;
- iii. defining advertising offers using targeting rules governing appropriateness, frequency and general conditions under which the offers may be presented to the user visiting the virtual portal;
- iv. determining which subset and execution sequence of a selected offer's targeting rule are applicable for a given user;
- v. executing the applicable rules against the activity history and pattern data resulting in a positive or negative condition for each rule or rule combination; and

vi. using a dd s erving s cripts, a pplying t he r ules g enerated a nd r eturned s o a s t o determine whether a selected marketing offer is appropriate for the user.

36. A method for dynamically generating and serving graphics based advertising offers to a user over an interactive communications network based upon information previously collected from the user through a virtual portal, which comprises the steps of:

- i. displaying a registration page to the user a user upon the user's entry to a virtual portal of a lottery Web site;
- ii. receiving selected registration information solicited from the user;
- iii. validating and storing the registration information in a selected database;
- iv. displaying a virtual popup Web page to the user with one or more selected Sweepstakes offers and, more or less concurrently, soliciting financial account information from the user;
- v. receiving Sweepstakes and financial account information input by the user;
- vi. validating and storing the financial account information in the selected database;
- vii. comparing the financial account information to a pre-determined Sweepstakes winning number to determine whether the user is a winner;
- viii. if the financial account information matches the winning data set, displaying a Web page popup to the user with notification that funds have been deposited in a financial account of the user;
- ix. if t he financial a ccount i nformation d oes n ot m atch t he w inning d ata m atch, generating a new winning number according to governing Sweepstakes rules;
- x. pre-selecting marketing offers based on user's registration information and/or

financial account information;

- xi. displaying the pre-selected marketing offers to the user;
- xii. receiving user-selected data corresponding to the offers;
- xiii. validating and storing the user-selected data in the selected database;
- xiv. processing the financial transaction associated with the user-selected data using the

user's stored financial account information;

xv. filling orders for goods and/or services placed by the user through the user-selected data;

xvi. upon completion of financial transaction processing, delivering the goods and/or services to the user; and

xvii. displaying one or more additional targeted marketing offers to the user based upon financial account information and registration information input by the user.